

# Cancer study questioned

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One of the LaSalle residents who asked the state Health Department to study cancer rates in that section of Niagara Falls said Friday she did not agree with the report's findings.

Linda Grant of 66th Street requested the study in December 1984. On Thursday, the health department said that incidences of cancer in LaSalle are not significantly higher than other comparable urban areas in the state.

"We asked them to study a two-block radius and they added the other areas, so the results look like nothing," Mrs. Grant said. "I don't agree with their findings or methods."

But Holly Howe, director of the health de-

partment's cancer surveillance programs, said the testing of three census areas was requested by the City of Niagara Falls.

The residents who requested the report live in an area designated as U.S. census tract 219. It is bordered by the LaSalle Expressway to the south, 70th Street to the east, Niagara Junction railroad line to the west and Niagara Falls Boulevard to the north. Two other census tracts, 220 and 221, were also studied using the state cancer registry from 1973-1982.

Ms. Howe said, "We didn't water anything down. In tract 219, the number (of people with cancer) was so small that it was not in our power to find any excess (of cancer) even if it existed. But because the people who requested the study lived there, we broke that area out in our report. It still shows nothing high."

Statistics for tract 219 show 56 cases of

cancer in both sexes. Sixty-six cases were expected, based on the health department's statistical criteria for estimating disease within a population.

There were 43 cases of cancer among men living in that area; 36 were expected. The types of cancer in men were: lung (15 cases observed, nine expected); reproductive organs (five observed, four expected); colorectal (five observed, six expected); urinary tract (six observed, four expected).

Among women living in tract 219, there were 13 cases of cancer observed while 30 were expected. Three cases of lung cancer were observed among women there; three were expected. One case of breast cancer was observed; nine were expected.

In tract 219, there were 24 male deaths from cancer; 17 were expected. Fourteen women died from cancer, while 13 female

deaths were expected.

The health department said it will continue to monitor cancer rates in Niagara Falls, especially lung cancer, since Niagara County's rate is higher than other areas of New York state. High levels of cigarette smoking could contribute to that rate, the report said.

Mrs. Grant said she thought the report would have looked beyond 1982. "A lot of people in that two-block area died after 1982," she said.

Ms. Howe admitted the health picture could change in several years. She said it is difficult to link environmental exposure to cancer because of the latency period of the disease. Cancer sufferers may have been exposed to cancer-causing agents 10 to 20 years before their inclusion in the cancer registry, she said.

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